

Knowing the “Enemy”: Practical Solutions for Deer and Other Pests

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“Naturescaping is the philosophy of designing with the whole environment, for wildlife, and with organic, sustainable methods; Forestscaping optimizes enjoying woodland and natural areas.”

We hear it all too often: “I hate deer.” Not only are they eating gardens, but increasing populations, are causing the destruction of the forest understory essential to songbird habitat. By knowing the perceived “enemy” and offering practical design solutions, your clients will welcome wildlife on their property.

Deer Management Gardening – hardy choices

Borders: Catmint, *Nepeta*; Oregano, *Origanum*; Thyme **Groupings/Slopes:** Lavender, *Lavandula*

Landscape: Sage, Allium, Garlic **Native:** Goldenrod, *Solidago* **Bulb:** Daffodils

Annual: Poppy, *Papaver orientale* **Failsafe Shrub:** Deer will not browse Barberries (*Berberis*)

Natives: Butterfly weed, *Asclepias tuberosa*; Poppy (*Papaver orientale*); Garlic

Groundcovers: Yarrow, *Achillea*; Ajuga; Astilbe; Trumpet Creeper, *Campsis radicans*, Dwarf Plumbago, *Ceratostigma plumbaginoides*, Leadwort, Tickseed, *Coreopsis*, Dianthus, Coneflower, *Echinacea purpurea*, Coral Bell, *Heuchera micrantha*, Candytuft, *Iberis sempervirens*, Juniper, Liriope, Fiddlehead/Ostrich Fern, *Matteuccia struthiopteris*, Fiddlehead Ostrich Fern, Cinnamon Fern, *Osmunda cinnamomea*, Royal Fern, *Osmunda regalis*, Pachysandra, Christmas Fern, *Polystichum acrostichoides*, Sedum, *Stonecrop*, Verbena, Periwinkle, *Vinca major*

*“I ask people why they have deer heads on their walls.
They always say because it's such a beautiful animal. There you go.
I think my mother is attractive, but I have photographs of her.”* Ellen DeGeneres

Client – Zone 6b and 5 - minimal deer browse plant list

Varieties seldom-browsed by Whitetail Deer and, if so, will recover.

Trees

Dogwood *Cornus florida* ‘Flowering ‘Cloud 9’, Kousa, *Cornus kousa*, Red Osier, *Cornus sericea*

English hawthorne, *Crataegus laevigata*; Japanese flowering cherry *Prunus serrulata*

Paper (White) Birch, *Betula papyrifera*; River Birch, *Betula nigra*

Spruce: Colorado Blue, *Picea pungens*, Bird’s Nest

Flowering Plum – *Prunus cerasifera* ‘Thundercloud’ - above browse height

Eastern Redbud - *Cercis canadensis* ‘Forest Pansy’ - above browse height

Shrubs

Andromeda (*Pieris japonica*) – ‘Dorothy Wycoff’; Boxwood; Inkberry

Lilac – Common Purple *Syringa vulgaris*, Miss Kim Lilac (*Syringa patula* ‘Miss Kim’);

Persian Lilac tree (*Syringa x persica*) and White - *Syringa reticulata* ‘Ivory Silk’

Mountain laurel – *Kalmia latifolia* - ‘Carousel’

Downy Serviceberry, *Amelanchier arborea* & Shadbush *Amelanchier canadensis*

Groundcover Shrubs

Juniperus chinensis -- Chinese Juniper 'Gold Coast', 'Sea Green' and other varieties

Picea abies, *P. glauca*, *P. pungens* –and dwarf cultivars of Spruces

Golden creeping juniper (*Juniperus horizontalis* 'Mother Lode') creeping juniper is deer-resistant (as is 'Blue Rug') and drought-tolerant. This groundcover's foliage is gold-to-bronze in winter.

Grasses

Hakonechloa macra 'Aureola', Feather Reed Grass (*Calamagrostis arundinacea* 'Karl Foerster'), Zebra Grass (*Miscanthus sinensis* 'Zebrinus'); Dwarf Fountain Grass (*Pennisetum alopecuroides* 'Hameln')

Bulbs: Allium, Daffodil **Landscape Herbs:** Oregano and Lemon Balm (compact habit)

Totally Carefree, Flowering Perennials

Catmint, Munstead English Lavender, Veronica, Salvia (*Salvia nemorosa* 'May Night'); Stella d'Oro Daylily – "Stella de Oro" *Hemerocallis* yellow and red: 'Ruby Stella' & 'Rosy Returns'

In-the-landscape & Cul de Sac choices

Aster, Artemisia (Silver Mound Sage), Butterfly Bush (Buddleia), Cleome, Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), Coreopsis 'Moonbeam' and 'Early Sunrise', Foxglove, Gayfeather (*Liatrus spicata*), perennial Geranium 'Johnson's Blue' *macrorrhizum*, Goldenrod, Lamb's Ears, Monarda, Oriental Poppy, Russian Sage, Sedum – Dragon's Blood & Autumn Joy, Sundrops, Sweet William (*Gallium*) Thyme, Turtleheads, Yarrow (yellow, red)

Problematic but worth trying

Astilbe (deer will nibble flowers; woodchucks aka groundhogs adore)

Spirea (takes over; wide spreader but attracts beneficial wildlife and deer ignore)

Focal point showstoppers/special use

Peony, American Smoketree (*Cotinus coggygria*) – sometimes browsed, Butterfly Bush (*Buddleia*), Magnolia acuminata 'Butterflies'

Ideal for a *contained* area –due to rocks - full sun

Butterfly Weed (milkweed) – to attract Monarch butterflies

Lawn-Reducing Foot-wide Planting Design for a Garden Border/Pathway

Edge and remove a foot-wide strip of lawn and cultivate soil, amend with soil-less mix and compost.

The length can be as long as you wish; this planting was designed to “guard” a 30 foot bed of annuals.

3 Catmint, 3 Dragon Blood Sedum, 4 Dwarf Yellow Marigold, 2 English Thyme, 3 Variegated Sage, 2 Oregano (and add any ornamental grasses). The scent of catmint, marigold, and repels deer.

This timeless poem is posted, facing the bears, in NYC's Central Park Polar Bear Habitat:

“Treat each bear as the last bear. Each wolf the last, each caribou. Each track the last track. Gone spoor, gone scat. There are no more deer trails no more flyways. Treat each animal as sacred, each minute our last. Ghost hooves. Ghost skulls. Death rattles and dry bones. Each bear walking alone in warm night air.”

- Gary Lawless

DEER FACTS: A doe's lifetime (11+ years) is within a 1/2 mile radius of where they were born. A bucks' adult range is within a mile radius unless food sources/habitat changes. Practice 'Square Mile Deer Management' to monitor health and population. Unplanned, erratic culling by one hunter can tilt a healthy balance of sex ratios for generations (resulting in increased birthrates and habitat destruction). Post property clearly and learn regional hunting laws.

Do not use property-surround fencing that blocks ancient deer trails, cuts off water sources, and reduces native habitat. Fence in edible and visual gardens and woodland areas that you will actively tend. Grow native plants for wildlife to eat and that will provide cover. Place a solid piece atop fencing (even 1 inch thick) to prevent deer from jumping. Use black plastic deer fencing to "see through" to the landscape. Plant Morning Glory, Clematis, and Trumpet Vine around posts.

WHAT YOU/YOUR CLIENTS CAN DO

Deer Management Observe "your" square mile's population and health; encourage open habitat, fence only to protect areas of visual and edible gardens, promote humane deterrents, and do not feed deer.

Dead Deer

Ask your town/county police and highway departments who to call to remove a dead deer on a road or on private property. Call for hours and rates of wildlife removal/relocation services before needing them. Submit an article to your paper: who to call if a deer has been hit, needs to be put down, or be removed.

Community Education

Search for deer management information on your State's website. Suggest deer composting to reduce taxpayer costs. Submit reminders to your local paper to use high beams, brake firmly, don't swerve, blow your horn, and "drive defensively since deer are most active in fall, particularly between sunset and sunrise, which increases the potential for collisions. Increase following distance between cars and slow down and use caution, particularly where deer crossing signs are posted. Since deer travel in small herds, one crossing a road will usually be followed by others.

Get Political

Head to your Town Board and ask that they adopt "Earn A Buck" – hunters must cull a doe before going for the rack. The battle cry? Does have fawns, not the bucks.

Stay-Away Recipes last for 2 weeks or until the next rain. **Garlic Spray:** Crush 6 large garlic cloves still in their skin, put in a labeled spray bottle, add cheap corn/vegetable oil & shake before using. You can also infuse with mint or rosemary. **Shrub Spray:** Beat 2-3 eggs, blend in 8 oz. hot pepper sauce, slowly add either 4 oz. of Murphy's Oil soap **OR** Ivory liquid dish soap. Pour into a labeled gallon jug, add water to fill. Shake well, strain and put in a labeled spray bottle or pour over plants to saturate.

Wise Woman's Deer Scoot: Crack eggs, blend, add vinegar, and place in bowls around your garden.

Barbara Hobens, an urban and wildlife gardening specialist, evaluates and designs properties using practical, sustainable, and feng shui principals. She utilizes client interviews, the "right plants," paths, seating, and personal spaces to maximize enjoyment of edible, visual and woodland properties used by wildlife to create a harmony of function and beauty. She was certified as a Deer Steward I, Quality Deer Management Association (2010) and as a Habitat Steward Host with the National Wildlife Federation (2011).

Author of the how-to and where-to garden primer, *Garden Your City*, Barbara has designed and installed public space, park, not-for-profit, community, historic, and residential gardens. Focusing on coaching to teach gardening and design skills, she formed Tarn Farm LLC to grow edible landscape herbs. She can be contacted for online & site consultations, lectures, and publishing queries at www.hudsonhighlandsgardendesign.com.

Native Plants Seldom Damaged by Deer: Perennials

Botanical Names

Aconitum sp.
Allium sp.
Amsonia tabernaemontana
Anemone sp.
Angelica sp.
Aquilegia spp.
Arctostaphylos uva-ursi
Arisaema triphyllum
Aruncus dioicus
Asarum sp.
Asclepias tuberosa
Aster sp.
Baptisia
Boltonia asteroides
Chelone sp.
Cimicifuga racemosa
Coreopsis sp.
Dicentra eximia
Echinacea purpurea
Eupatorium sp.
Filipendula sp.
Geranium maculatum
Geum sp.
Helenium sp.
Hibiscus moscheutos
Iris spp.
Liatris spicata
Lupinus sp.
Matteuccia struthiopteris
Mitchella repens
Monarda sp.
Oenothera sp.
Onoclea sensibilis
Osmunda cinnamomea
Osmunda claytoniana
Osmunda regalis
Pachysandra sp.
Polemonium caeruleum
Polystichum acrostichoides
Potentilla sp.
Rudbeckia sp.
Solidago sp.
Tanacetum sp.
Thalictrum sp.
Thelypteris noveboracensis
Tiarella sp.
Viola labradorica
Yucca sp.

Common Names

Monkshood
Ornamental Onion
Amsonia
Anemones
Angelica
Columbine
Bearberry
Jack-in-the-Pulpit
Goatsbeard
Wild Ginger
Butterfly Weed
Asters
False Indigo
Boltonia
Turtlehead
Bugbane
Coreopsis
Bleeding Heart
Purple Coneflower
Joe-Pye Weed
Queen-of-the-Prairie
Cranesbill Geranium
Avens
Helen's Flower, Sneezeweed
Marsh Mallow, Rose Mallow
Iris
Spike Gayfeather
Lupine
Ostrich Fern
Partridgeberry
Bee Balm
Evening Primrose
Sensitive Fern
Cinnamon Fern
Interrupted Fern
Royal Fern
Pachysandra
Jacob's Ladder
Christmas Fern
Cinquefoil
Black-eyed Susan
Goldenrod
Tansy
Meadow Rue
New York Fern
Foamflower
Labrador Violet
Yucca

Native Plants Seldom Damaged by Deer: Shrubs

Botanical Names

Calycanthus floridus
Cotinus obovatus
Hamamelis virginiana
Hydrangea sp.
Ilex glabra
Ilex opaca
Juniperus sp.
Kalmia latifolia
Leucothoe fontanesiana
Lindera benzoin
Myrica sp.
Symphoricarpus
Viburnum sp.

Common Names

Carolina All-spice, Sweet Shrub
American Smoketree
Witch Hazel
Hydrangea
Ink Berry
American Holly
Juniper
Mountain Laurel
Dog Hobble
Spicebush
Bayberry
Snowberry
Viburnum

Native Plants Seldom Damaged by Deer: Trees

Botanical Names

Acer sp.
Betula sp.
Carpinus caroliniana
Cornus sp.
Larix laricina
Liquidambar styraciflua
Magnolia sp.
Oxydendrum arboreum
Picea sp.
Pinus sp.
Salix sp.
Sassafras albidum
Tsuga canadensis

Common Names

Maple
Birch
Hornbeam
Flowering Dogwood
American Larch, Tamarack
Sweet Gum
Magnolia
Sourwood
Spruce
Pine
Willow
Common Sassafras
Canadian Hemlock

An Ecological Argument for Hunting

QDMA.com - by: Dr. R. Larry Marchinton and Dr. Karl V. Miller

There are those of us who prefer to live the life of the hunter/gatherer-taking at least some of our sustenance in the natural way our ancestors did over the 100,000 years prior to the agricultural and industrial revolutions. Is this wrong? Is this something to be discouraged in our modern society? We do not think so.

At current harvest rates, use of the renewable products of natural plant and animal communities is much less damaging to the ecosystem than it would be to change these natural communities into agricultural fields or factories to produce the food we need. In the United States roughly 3 million white-tailed deer are harvested each year from a still-growing population of approximately 19 million. This translates to about 150 million pounds of meat. Add to this the amount of elk, turkey, squirrel, rabbit and other game as well as wild fruits, nuts, and vegetables that is consumed. To produce this amount of beef, chicken, or vegetable crops in addition to that which is already produced would be ecologically devastating.

Acres and acres of wild places would have to be destroyed to accommodate this increased agricultural production. More wildlife habitat would have to be plowed under. More pesticides would be applied. More soil erosion would occur. More waterways would become lifeless drainage ditches. Isn't it better that some of us reap a sustained harvest from natural systems, rather than destroy these systems?

Some may argue that producing the gasoline, shells, etc., necessary to hunt is more environmentally damaging than just buying our meat, fruits, and vegetables in the store. To this we would say-maybe, but we all will do some kind of recreation whether it is going to a movie, playing golf, attending football games, or bird watching. These require as much or more gasoline and other environmentally expensive and/or damaging products as hunting. Golf appears to be an environmentally benign sport, but consider the wildlife habitat destroyed for 18 holes. Consider also that golf courses are among the most heavily pesticided lands-fertilizers, herbicides, fungicides, insecticides. Our recreation uses the natural environment, while other recreational activities replace it, often with a man-made environment that can never be restored to its original condition. We as hunters may use it, but they destroy it. And, since our recreation requires a natural environment, we are, and always have been, one of the primary agents responsible for preserving the natural environment from those who would convert it to a man-made environment.

The world's population has gone far too high to allow all or even most of its people the option of being hunter/gatherers, but those that can and prefer to use renewable, naturally produced resources in a sustainable manner certainly should be encouraged. Is it not better to participate in the natural system, rather than destroy it completely? When we obtain both our recreation and some of our sustenance from natural (i.e., non-agricultural) systems we believe the environment comes out the clear winner in most cases. What do you think?

Quality People Management

QDMA.com - by: Lindsay Thomas Jr. – (an excerpt)

Managing deer is easy.

It's a matter of scientific fact that, with age, a buck grows in body and antler size. Science has also confirmed that deer supplied with good nutrition will be healthier and more productive than deer with lower nutrition. We also know beyond the shadow of a doubt that hunters can manipulate population levels through doe harvest, and that a population maintained in balance with the habitat's carrying capacity is healthier.

So, what's so difficult about managing deer? Just let bucks gain some age, increase available nutrition, shoot the right number of does, and you're in business!

Managing deer IS easy.

It's managing people that's difficult.

Thank you and have a most wonderful year and experiences!